

AIR WAR COLLEGE

AIR UNIVERSITY

THE SQUADRON COMMANDER'S RESPONSIBILITY  
FOR OFFICER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

by

Digital Collections

Patrick/Sutherland, Lt Col, USAF

A Research Report Submitted to the Faculty

In Partial Fulfillment of the Graduation Requirements

Advisor: Col Mark Danigole

13 February 2014

## **DISCLAIMER**

The views expressed in this academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the US government, the Department of Defense, or Air University. In accordance with Air Force Instruction 51-303, it is not copyrighted, but is the property of the United States government.



## **Biography**

Lt Col Patrick Sutherland is assigned to the Air War College, Air University, Maxwell AFB, AL. He is a career intelligence officer who has served previously as a squadron commander, a branch chief on the Joint Staff, a squadron director of operations, and a senior intelligence officer for a bomber wing.



## **Abstract**

Squadron commanders (Sq/CCs), as Air Force leaders, have a duty to help create future leaders. While officer professional development (OPD) is a duty Sq/CCs take seriously, it is a concept that does not have a common understanding in the Air Force. This paper synthesizes relevant Air Force doctrine and instructions to create an OPD framework that is consistent with the Air Force's overall force development strategy. Based on this OPD framework, this paper argues that Sq/CCs have a responsibility to professionally develop their officers in five categories: training, education, experience, career guidance, and leadership. This framework can be used by Sq/CCs to reflect, plan, and execute OPD for their assigned officers in a manner that supports the Air Force's existing professional development construct. After describing these responsibilities, this paper concludes with three recommendations. First, the Air Force should rescind or update the current OPD Air Force Instruction. Second, the Air Force should provide coherent OPD guidance, using the 5-category framework. Third, the Air Force should create an online repository for Sq/CCs to access OPD related materials.

## Introduction

“Hey, you can use this leadership article for your next Officer Professional Development (OPD) session.” That sentence was in the body of an email sent to a squadron commander (Sq/CC). After a quick scan, several questions crossed his mind. “Is this what I want my officers to read? Is this what the Air Force wants its junior officers to reflect on? How does this article fit into the broader development of my officers? Do we have time to fit this article into our busy schedule?”

As he reflected on these questions, it occurred to him the vast majority of OPD sessions he had attended throughout his career focused on career progression topics. For example, topics like the officer promotion system or the developmental team process. This created a perception that “OPD” was synonymous with “career advancement.” However, the article emailed to him was about leadership, not career advancement.

His confusion over what constitutes OPD was not clarified when preparing for command. Senior mentors (Generals and Colonels) at the MAJCOM squadron commander course impressed on the soon to be Sq/CCs that developing junior officers would be part of their duty. Discussions included mentorship techniques and administrative processes designed to help advance officers careers. As he left the course, he had the sense most of the soon to be commanders were highly motivated to “take care of our officers”. However, he still did not have a clear concept of exactly what OPD is and what his role as a Sq/CC should be.

When he reflected on the guidance given at the MAJCOM commanders’ course, his past experience at “OPD sessions,” and discussions with peers, he was left with more questions than answers. What specifically does the Air Force consider OPD? Additionally, as a new Sq/CC, he felt a strong sense of duty to conduct OPD, but was unable to clearly articulate his role.

Thus, the intent of this paper is to propose the Air Force provide Sq/CCs a framework to understand their OPD responsibility which complements how the service develops the force. Furthermore, this paper argues the Sq/CC's role and responsibility for OPD, as part of the Air Force's overall force development strategy, is to help develop their assigned officers in five distinct categories: training, education, experience, career guidance, and leadership. The scope of this paper is limited to the Sq/CC responsibility for OPD. However, clarity for what the Air Force considers OPD is required to determine a Sq/CCs role. Therefore, this paper first reviews and synthesizes guidance to clarify what the Air Force considers OPD. It then describes a Sq/CC's responsibility in the five categories of OPD. Lastly, this paper makes three specific recommendations for the Air Force to adopt.

## **Background**

The roles of an Air Force officer include warfighter, servant to the Nation, member of the profession of arms, and a leader of character. To fulfill these vital roles, a continual developmental process is required.<sup>1</sup> No longer will pre-commissioning events and three levels of professional military education (PME) suffice.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, professional development will take on even greater importance over the course of the next decade. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey, stated in his Capstone Concept for Joint Operations that 80% of the 2020 force was programmed or already existed in 2012. Therefore, "...many of our most important advancements will come through innovations in *training, education, personnel management, and leadership development* (emphasis added)."<sup>3</sup> Thus, improved OPD guidance for Sq/CCs will help the Air Force continuously develop its officers.

## Air Force OPD Guidance

AFI 36-2611, *Officer Professional Development*, was published in 1996; however it is no longer relevant. It gives brief information on topics which have more current guidance. Specifically, it has one to two page chapters on topics such as the officer evaluation system, the promotion system, PME, and the assignment system. All these topics now have their own current and robust AFI. Not surprisingly, AFI 36-2611 contains some inaccurate guidance as well. For example, it still refers to the Electronic Bulletin Board (EBB) for officers to find jobs they want to volunteer for when they are up for assignment. The EBB no longer exists and any reference to it cannot be found in the current AFI 36-2110, *Assignments*.

Without a current, consolidated OPD guidance document, the Air Force perspective on OPD must be gleaned from multiple documents. The Air Force's overall force development (FD) strategy is captured in Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 1-1, *Leadership and Force Development*. Officers, as leaders of the overall force, are part of this FD strategy. In concert with AFDD 1-1, several other supporting policy documents and instructions provide current and relevant OPD guidance. These documents govern total force development, assignments, developmental education, the officer evaluation system, and mentoring.<sup>4</sup> Even though these various documents describe the five OPD categories, a synthesis of this current guidance would be useful for Sq/CC's when considering the who, what, when, where, and how of conducting OPD. The first step in this synthesis is to understand the Air Force FD strategy.

Force development provides a leadership focus at all levels of an Airman's career through a repetitive process of development involving education, training, and experience, seasoned with ongoing mentoring by more experienced Airmen

– AFDD 1-1, p. 38(emphasis added)

Sq/CCs must understand the key components of FD when developing assigned officers. The Air Force's institutional FD construct gives special emphasis to the three categories of *training*, *education*, and *experience*. These categories occur throughout an Airman's entire career, often in a structured and formal manner. Training focuses on structured skills and produces skills expertise. Education provides critical thinking skills and helps prepare an officer for unpredictability. Experience then synthesizes training and education throughout a career to equip Airmen with competencies to serve as leaders as they progress in rank.<sup>5</sup> Since these categories are largely accomplished through institutional processes, Sq/CCs need to understand how they can best serve their assigned officers in these areas. Additionally, there are some elements of training, education, and experience which Sq/CCs can develop within their officers that are outside of institutional processes.

*Career guidance* comprises the fourth category of a Sq/CC's OPD responsibilities. While AFDD 1-1 states mentoring is an aspect of FD, this paper proposes many aspects of mentoring actually fall into the categories of education, training, experience, and leadership. However, the "career guidance" aspect of mentoring should be considered its own category, thereby providing greater specificity in describing a Sq/CCs OPD responsibility.<sup>6</sup>

The fifth OPD category is *leadership*. Former Chief of Staff of the Air Force, Gen Norton Schwartz, stated a need to renew focus on officer leadership development.<sup>7</sup> A



subsequent study determined today's company grade officers are more likely to be charged with addressing challenges that senior leaders handled in previous generations.<sup>8</sup> As current leaders, Sq/CCs have a duty to help create future leaders.<sup>9</sup> OPD is the mechanism by which Sq/CCs meet this responsibility.

Table 1 depicts how a Sq/CC can conceptualize the five categories of OPD. The provided examples of Sq/CC responsibilities are not all-inclusive, as additional OPD responsibilities can fall into those categories. This table provides the framework for the next section of this paper.

### **The Squadron Commander's Responsibilities for OPD**

<b>OPD Category</b>	<b>Training</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Experience</b>	<b>Career Guidance</b>	<b>Leadership</b>
Examples of Sq/CC responsibilities	-AFS Skills -Ancillary Training	-PME advocacy -Masters advocacy -Professional Reading Program	-Assignments -Deployments -Special duties and projects	- Performance feedback - Professional Advancement Mentorship	-Shadowing -Institutional Competencies

Table 1. The Five Categories of Officer Professional Development

#### **Training**

By and large, the Air Force is very good at training its officers. Regardless of specialty, officers are initially trained through an existing institutional pipeline. Most officers arrive in units where there is a well-defined training program. Training may be managed by a particular office or duty section. Flight commanders and Operations Officers often get directly involved to help ensure officers meet training requirements.<sup>10</sup> For a Sq/CC then, what exactly is his or her role in training?

With respect to technical specialty training (aircrew, maintenance, weather, intelligence, etc), as well as ancillary training requirements, a Sq/CC may not need to create any additional

procedures or programs. Training items, currencies, or similar requirements may already be covered as part of the unit's ingrained processes. If so, continued oversight may be all that is required. However, some Sq/CCs may need to give more personal attention than others to ensure officers are properly trained. Generally speaking, Sq/CCs are well versed in mission and ancillary training requirements for their units; therefore this paper will not overly focus on this category of OPD. It should be noted the importance of training is not diminished based on the brevity of its discussion in this paper. To the contrary, training is arguably the most important aspect of an officer's development, as evidenced by its primacy in doctrine and the fact that most officers begin their career with training immediately after commissioning. Training is often associated with the second OPD category, *Education*, but as the next section shows they are distinct from one another.

## **Education**

Sq/CCs can impact their assigned officers' education level in several ways. These include, but are not limited to, advocacy for correspondence and in-residence PME, encouraging advanced degree completion, and providing unit-level educational programs or events.

The Sq/CCs role in officers PME is largely one of encouragement and advocacy. Sq/CCs should encourage their officers to complete their applicable PME by correspondence as soon as practical.<sup>11</sup> Not only does PME completion provide military specific education, it can also have a dramatic effect on career advancement. The Air Force has institutionalized its desire for highly educated officers through its emphasis on education at promotion boards. For example, the three Line of the Air Force (LAF) Major boards from 2010 to 2012 had an 89 percent promotion rate. However, each board had a zero percent promotion rate for those without Squadron Officer School (SOS) completed.<sup>12</sup> As mission requirements allow, Sq/CCs may encourage officers to

work on correspondence PME during normal duty hours. Sq/CCs should also be familiar with developmental education policies which impact how assigned officers should approach their distance learning options. For example, it is important to understand current Air Force policy does not mandate a 100% SOS in-residence attendance rate.<sup>13</sup>

While Sq/CCs primarily encourage officers to complete correspondence PME, the Sq/CC's role transitions to one of advocacy for in-residence PME. Commanders increase their effectiveness when they understand the local preferences or policies established by the senior rater. For example, Sq/CCs must know what factors the group and wing commanders consider when choosing SOS attendees and intermediate developmental education (IDE) nominees. Once armed with this knowledge, Sq/CCs can more effectively advocate on behalf of their officers. For SOS, typically senior raters are given a number of slots and the organization has local procedures for determining who will fill those slots. An exception is that non-line officer SOS allocations are managed through the functional community. For IDE, senior raters are given a quota on how many officers they can nominate to the career field's developmental team (DT).<sup>14</sup> Procedures can change from year to year, so Sq/CCs should carefully read the personnel message that announces requirements and milestones for the in-residence school selection process.

PME may soon undergo substantial changes which will greatly impact how Sq/CCs encourage and advocate for educational development.<sup>15</sup> These potential changes will not only impact PME, but also how officers can earn a Master's degree. What will not change is the need for Sq/CCs to encourage officers earn a Masters for both education and promotion reasons. For example, 79 percent of the officers who met the 2013 LAF Lt Colonel board with a Master's degree were promoted, while only 16 percent of those without one were promoted.<sup>16</sup> Beyond encouraging officers to get a Master's degree, Sq/CCs can advocate for certain officers to be

selected for special programs such as the Olmsted scholarship or the White House Fellows Program.<sup>17</sup> Regardless of how it is earned, the Air Force continues to show its strong preference for highly educated officers that have both the appropriate level of PME and who have obtained a Master's degree. Sq/CCs can help their officers through encouraging and advocating their educational development.

Although formal education is important to critical thinking and intellectual development, Sq/CCs can also develop an officer's intellect through unit level programs. One example is a professional reading program. While research for this paper shows few Sq/CCs employ a reading program, it could be a viable option for some commanders.<sup>18</sup> A 2012 Air Force Study recommended commanders develop their own reading programs based on the annual CSAF reading list. Through discussion of these books, commanders demonstrate their commitment to lifelong learning and instill critical thinking skills in junior officers.<sup>19</sup> Another example of a unit level education initiative is the study of military history and heritage. Historical case studies or offsite events like "staff rides" to battlefields are additional avenues to educate young officers. Additionally, educating officers on the squadron's lineage and wartime history not only imparts knowledge, but helps strengthen esprit de corps within the unit.

## **Experience**

Much like education, officers gain experience in several ways. First and foremost, from the Air Force institutional perspective, depth and breadth of experience is achieved through duty assignments.<sup>20</sup> Sq/CCs have a critical role in their officers' assignment process. In addition to the assignment process, Sq/CCs can help develop an officer's experience in other ways. Examples include deployments, as well as special duties or projects, both within and outside of the squadron.

Sq/CCs serve as both a counselor to their officers as well as their representative to the assignment team. As a counselor, they rely on their own experience and understanding to advise their officers on assignment options. Both professional and personal factors should be considered when a junior officer and a Sq/CC discuss assignment options. Professionally, factors such as timing and breadth are important. Timing for certain assignments can vary from one career field to another. For example, staff assignments may be a great idea for some young to mid-grade Captains, whereas certain career fields value successive CGO assignments in operational units.<sup>21</sup> If the Sq/CC is unfamiliar with the officer's career specialty, then he or she must become informed, potentially through trusted colleagues or through discussions with the Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC) assignment team. While professional considerations are paramount when counseling officers on assignment opportunities, Sq/CCs should also consider legitimate personal circumstances as well. Personal or family issues, whether health related or other unique circumstances, can potentially impact an officers ability to perform the next assignment.

Once the Sq/CC weighs personal and professional considerations, he or she communicates an assignment recommendation to the applicable AFPC assignment team. By current policy, formal interaction with the officer and AFPC occurs through the web-based Airman Development Plan (ADP) tool. Regardless of the tool, whether ADP, the Assignment Management System website, or any other future system, the fundamental role of the Sq/CC is to counsel their officers and provide a recommendation to the assignment team.<sup>22</sup>

The Permanent Change of Assignment (PCA) option is another avenue for experience development. Junior officers may be assigned to locations for extended periods of time. In these situations, co-located commanders negotiate no-cost PCA arrangements for officers when it

makes sense for mission and OPD reasons. As budgets continue to decline, commanders may increasingly use PCA's to help offset potentially reduced Permanent Change of Station (PCS) opportunities.

Another means to grow experience for assigned officers is through deployments. Within the Air Force FD concept, deployment experience is equated with assignment experience.<sup>23</sup> Sq/CCs may have the option to choose which officer goes downrange for a particular deployment. Assuming mission requirements are met, if an officer has not had an opportunity to deploy, OPD may be an appropriate rationale to select him or her for a deployment.

A Sq/CC can also look for opportunities to help officers gain unique experience. For example, junior officers may have an opportunity to participate in a broadening experience such as serving as a promotion board recorder. If mission requirements allow, a Sq/CC may want a junior officer to gain that unique experience. Another example is assigning a special project to an officer. This approach can be useful if the project is a real challenge and adds value to the unit. To maximize the developmental experience, Sq/CCs may want to clearly explain the intent of the project itself, as well as the developmental goal for the officer. For example, the Sq/CC may want the officer to gain technical knowledge, exercise certain management skills, or gain leadership experience by focusing on particular leadership competencies.<sup>24</sup>

### **Career Guidance**

While training, education and experience provide officers a developmental foundation, career guidance provides *performance feedback* and helps them understand how *professional advancement* occurs. Performance feedback occurs primarily through the evaluation system, while professional advancement mentorship can occur in many ways, with only several discussed in this paper.<sup>25</sup>

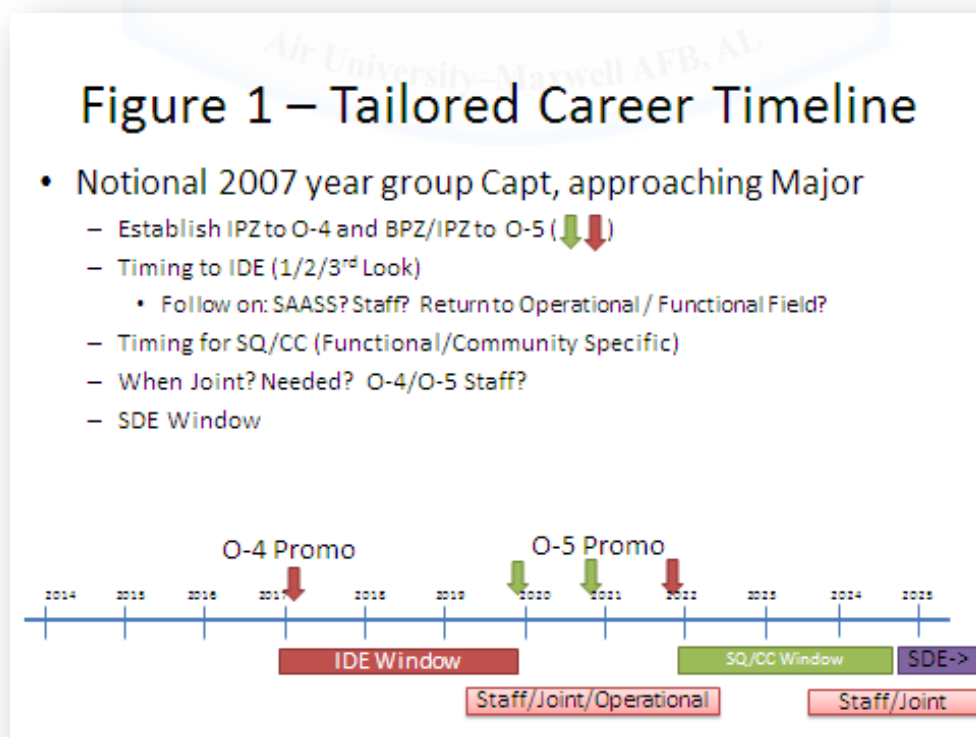
Sq/CCs not only ensure Officer Performance Reports (OPRs) are accomplished, but they also ensure the spirit and intent of the evaluation system are maintained. OPRs are records of performance, but are also feedback mechanisms to help develop better officers. Officers should be informed of expectations prior to a reporting period and given honest feedback during and after the reporting period. These actions are mandatory for Lieutenants and Captains, but optional above Major.<sup>26</sup> Sq/CCs rely on the chain of command to execute this process, but can set the tone by how they communicate expectations and feedback to direct subordinates.

While the evaluation system enables feedback on performance, officers still need to understand how certain aspects of career progression work. Therefore, Sq/CCs can directly, or indirectly through trusted subordinates, mentor their officers about a variety of professional advancement topics. These topics include, but are not limited to, the officer promotion system, the assignment process, awards and decorations, developmental education opportunities and processes, and the developmental team process. The importance and scope of each of these topics can easily warrant multiple mentoring sessions, whether in a large group, small group, or a one-on-one setting.<sup>27</sup>

Sq/CCs can also provide tailored professional advancement mentorship to individual officers. A thorough records review and feedback session provides a great opportunity to learn the officer's background and career aspirations. There are common areas for Sq/CCs to understand about each officer. What is the officer's date of rank and how does it relate to promotion timing? Does the officers' record include any derogatory information? If so, what is the career impact? Does the officer have the appropriate level PME and Master's degree completed? What is the officer's duty and deployment history? Has the officer earned any significant awards? Is the officer lacking any duty-level appropriate medals? Is there any

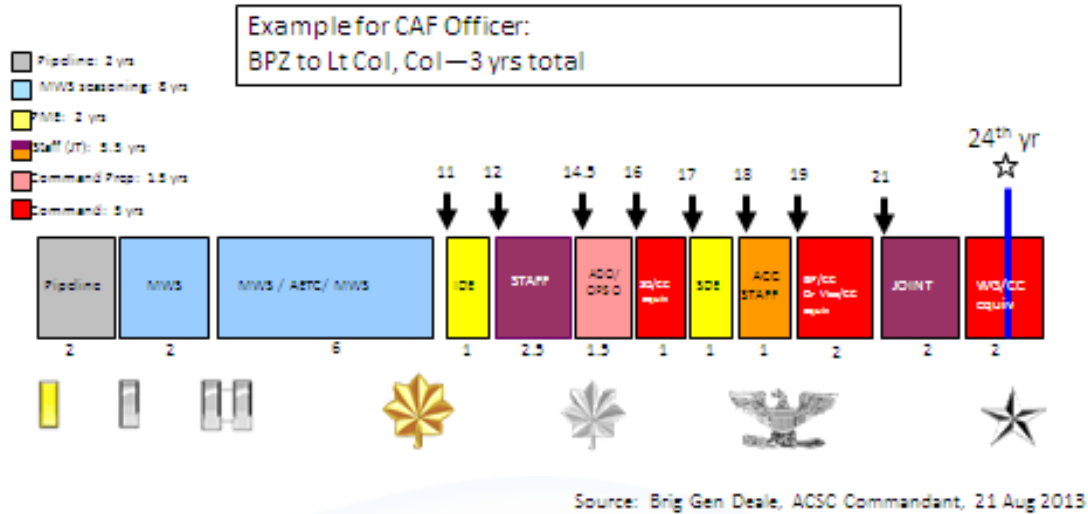
missing or inaccurate information? At the conclusion of a career counseling session, the Sq/CC and the officer should have clear answers to these and any other relevant questions.<sup>28</sup>

Another career counseling technique Sq/CCs can use for individual officers is “career flight plans.” This approach can take a number of forms. One example is a timeline which identifies specific milestones in an individuals’ career. This tailored timeline can be built to help an officer project out five, ten, or more years. Another example is a linear common career path based on the officers’ specialty. These products can help a Sq/CC effectively communicate to a young officer the many professional and personal variables to consider as they progress throughout a career. However, in all instances, Sq/CCs must give honest assessments of the officer’s performance and realistic expectations for future service potential. Figure 1 and 2 below are examples of a tailored timeline for an officer approaching Major and a common career path example for a Combat Air Forces (CAF) aviator.





## Figure 2 – Common Career Path



Professional advancement mentorship is important because it arms young officers with knowledge of how career progression really works. However, several graduated Sq/CCs provided cautionary comments regarding the danger of creating an atmosphere of careerism. While these commanders strongly desired to provide career guidance, they balanced their OPD approach to guard against building a careerist mentality. One graduated Sq/CC noted his concern that too many officers perceive career guidance as the only OPD category. He believed this short-sighted view often comes at the expense of building leadership skills in younger officers.<sup>29</sup> One method to help guard against careerism is to intentionally focus on leadership development.

## Leadership

All graduated Sq/CCs interviewed for this paper felt it was their duty to develop leadership in subordinate officers. However, many Sq/CCs voiced concerns about leadership development that centered on available *time* and *scope* of the topic. Potential ways to mitigate these two challenges are discussed below.

Most Sq/CCs found it very difficult in a jam-packed schedule to find the time to deliberately focus on leadership development.<sup>30</sup> Many Sq/CCs detailed techniques to compensate for this deficiency. Several Sq/CCs would build in mentoring opportunities by simply bringing along a junior officer to certain events. These events include, but are not limited to, staff meetings, Wing Stand-up, and status of discipline meetings. Many also stated they would have officers present when they executed disciplinary action. Using events and activities as shadow opportunities is a smart and efficient method to help develop junior officers. It exposes them to a broader perspective of the issues their leadership faces and how they handle some difficult challenges. While shadowing is an efficient and effective means to develop certain aspects of leadership, it does not constitute the entirety of a Sq/CCs role. This brings up the second challenge associated with this developmental area.

As with the broader concept of OPD, there is no consensus on exactly what aspects of leadership Sq/CCs should develop in their officers.<sup>31</sup> The topic of leadership development is incredibly broad with no shortage of sub-topics. While Sq/CCs should always have the leeway to determine which areas of leadership development they will conduct, providing a starting point can help save time and provide focus. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest Sq/CCs focus on those institutional competencies that the Air Force, as an institution, has stated are desirable leadership traits for its junior officers.

The Air Force has articulated eight desired competencies for all Airmen and incorporated these traits into its FD model. These are called “Institutional Competencies (ICs)” and are aligned with tactical, operational and strategic levels of leadership.<sup>32</sup> A careful review of AFDD 1-1 provides insight on these competencies and how the Air Force develops them across the force. See table 2 for a breakout of all ICs and their associated sub-competencies.

Leadership Level	Category	Institutional Competency (IC)	Sub-competency
Tactical Expertise	Personal	Embodies Airman Culture	-Ethical Leadership -Followership -Warrior Ethos -Develops Self
		Communicating	-Speaking & Writing -Active Listening
Operational Competence	People/Team	Leading People	-Develops and Inspires Others -Takes Care of People -Diversity
		Fostering Collaborative Relationships	-Builds Teams and Coalitions -Negotiating
Strategic Vision	Organizational	Employing Military Capabilities	-Operational and Strategic Art -Unit, AF, Joint, and Coalition Capabilities -Non-adversarial Crisis Response
		Enterprise Perspective	-Enterprise Structure and Relationships -Government Organization and Processes -Global, Regional, and Cultural Awareness -Strategic Communication
		Managing Organizations and Resources	-Resource Stewardship -Change Management -Continuous Improvement
		Strategic Thinking	-Vision -Decision Making -Adaptability

Table 2. Air Force Leadership Levels and Institutional Competency List<sup>33</sup>

Given that most officers at the squadron level are Major and below, Sq/CCs should focus on topics commensurate with those ranks. Thus, to best complement the Air Force's existing FD process, Sq/CCs can focus leadership development on the tactical and operational level ICs. The two ICs at the tactical level are considered personal competencies and are listed as "Embodies Airman Culture" and "Communicating." The two operational level ICs are considered People/Team competencies and are listed as "Leading People" and "Fostering Collaborative Relationships." These personal and team oriented competencies provide a starting point for determining which leadership topics Sq/CCs should develop in their officers. See AFDD 1-1 for further discussion of these ICs and associated sub-competencies.<sup>34</sup>

### **Executing OPD**

In reality, Sq/CCs are always executing OPD, as they are "always on parade." Subordinate officers continuously learn from the example of senior officers and it is important for Sq/CC's to understand when it comes to OPD, it can sometimes be "more caught than taught." That said, a Sq/CCs intentional execution of OPD can take many different forms.

Executing the five categories of OPD happens both as a matter of conducting day to day business and through intentional scheduling of events. For example, ensuring officers are appropriately trained may take the form of direct participation in training events, and then leading process improvement efforts. Or it could simply mean reviewing training status slides at a staff meeting. A Sq/CC's OPD responsibility for education and experience often comes in the mundane execution of administrative paperwork, such as ensuring officer's ADPs and AF Form 3849, *PME Officer Worksheet*, are processed accurately and on time. Career guidance and leadership development can happen in large group settings and also in smaller groups, including one-on-one interactions. Information and materials to help Sq/CCs execute career guidance and

leadership development can be personally created, gained from colleagues, DT's, or accessed through a number of sources and websites.<sup>35</sup>

## **Recommendations**

An environment of declining budgets and reduced personnel make it difficult for leaders to approve new initiatives, especially if they involve a significant investment of time and money. However, a few low-cost OPD improvements can help Sq/CCs continuously develop the officer corps.

- **First recommendation:** The Air Force should rescind or update AFI 36-2611, *Officer Professional Development*. It is over 17 years old, describes outdated processes, and does not take into account a broader view of OPD as described in current Air Force doctrine, instructions, and manuals;
- **Second recommendation:** The Air Force should provide Sq/CCs coherent OPD guidance, either in a new AFI or other authoritative guidance document. It should use the 5-category framework described in this paper; and
- **Third Recommendation:** The Air Force should create an online repository for Sq/CC's to access OPD related materials. Priority should be placed on career guidance and leadership development materials. Leadership development materials should focus on competencies critical to tactical and on operational levels of leadership.

Adoption of these recommendations will provide clear guidance and useful resources to help Sq/CC's execute their OPD responsibilities.

## **Conclusion**

Air Force Sq/CCs are highly motivated to professionally develop their officers.<sup>36</sup>

However, Sq/CCs across the force lack a coherent understanding of what the Air Force considers OPD. Consequently, there is not a clear view as to what constitutes the Sq/CC's role for officer development. This paper argues Sq/CCs have OPD responsibilities in five categories: training, education, experience, career guidance, and leadership. These categories fully support the Air Force's institutional force development paradigm.

Ideally Sq/CCs will take time to reflect on how to approach their OPD responsibility prior to taking command. After taking the guidon, there will never be enough time to accomplish all aspects of OPD. There is no cookie-cutter approach that works for every unit or individual. Sq/CCs must prioritize the aspects of OPD they consider most important for their assigned officers. Therefore, this paper provides a framework for Sq/CCs to reflect, plan, and execute OPD during their command tour. In doing so, Sq/CCs will fully support the Air Force FD strategy by developing the officers they are charged to lead.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 1-1, *Leadership and Force Development*, 8 November 2011, 4.

<sup>2</sup> Air Force Research Institute (AFRI), Air University, Air Force Leadership Study, The Need for Deliberate Development, staff study, February 2012, vii.

<sup>3</sup> General Martin L. Dempsey, *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations 2020*, Joint Chiefs of Staff, September 10, 2012, iii.

<sup>4</sup> The following Air Force documents were synthesized to determine the five categories of OPD: AFDD 1-1, *Leadership and Force Development*, AFD 36-26, *Total Force Development*, AFI 36-2110, *Assignments*, AFI 36-2301, *Developmental Education*, AFI 36-2406, *Officer and Enlisted Evaluation Systems*, AFI 36-2640, *Executing Total Force Development*, and AFMAN 36-2643, *Air Force Mentoring Program*.

<sup>5</sup> AFDD 1-1, *Leadership and Force Development*, 39-40.

<sup>6</sup> All mentoring discussion topics in paragraph A2.1, AFMAN 36-2643, Air Force Mentoring Program, were determined to fit within the five OPD categories proposed in this paper.

<sup>7</sup> AFRI, Air Force Leadership Study, 1.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>9</sup> AFDD 1-1, *Leadership and Force Development*, 47

<sup>10</sup> Lt Col George Clark, Lt Col AJ Werner, and Lt Col Greg Wood (Air War College students and graduated Sq/CCs), interviewed by the author, January 14, 2014.

<sup>11</sup> Air Force Instruction (AFI) 36-2301, *Developmental Education*, 16 July 2010, incorporating through change 2, 9 July 2013, 23-24.

<sup>12</sup> Air Force Personnel Center – Static Reports, Historical Line Master, [http://access.afpc.af.mil/vbinDMZ/broker.exe?\\_program=DEMOGPUB.static\\_reports.sas&\\_service=pZ1pub1&\\_debug=0](http://access.afpc.af.mil/vbinDMZ/broker.exe?_program=DEMOGPUB.static_reports.sas&_service=pZ1pub1&_debug=0). Additionally, it should be noted the significant difference in promotion rates for those who completed SOS in-residence (93 percent) versus those who completed it only in correspondence (63 percent).

<sup>13</sup> AFI 36-2301, *Developmental Education*, 16.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 17-23.

<sup>15</sup> Mr. John Carter, Director, Academic Operations, Spaatz Center for Officer Education, “Professional Military Education Transformation” (lecture, Air War College, Maxwell AFB, AL, 14 November 2013)

<sup>16</sup> Air Force Personnel Center – Static Reports, Historical Line Master, [http://access.afpc.af.mil/vbinDMZ/broker.exe?\\_program=DEMOGPUB.static\\_reports.sas&\\_service=pZ1pub1&\\_debug=0](http://access.afpc.af.mil/vbinDMZ/broker.exe?_program=DEMOGPUB.static_reports.sas&_service=pZ1pub1&_debug=0)

<sup>17</sup> Memorandum, PSDM 13-54, from Air Force Personnel Center to all Force Support Squadrons, A-1s, and J-1s, CY13 Call for Applicants for Special Programs, June 14, 2013.

<sup>18</sup> 12 of 13 (92%) graduated Sq/CCs interviewed for this paper reported they did not have a professional reading program in their squadron. The only one who did have a professional reading program used books that focused on management techniques to give his officers additional management and leadership tools. He did not base it on the CSAF reading list.

<sup>19</sup> AFRI, Air Force Leadership Study, 42.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 24-27.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>22</sup> AFI 36-2110, *Assignments*, 22 September 2009, incorporating through change 2, 8 June 2012, 364-365 and AFI 36-2640, *Executing Total Force Development*, 16 December 2008, 7.

<sup>23</sup> AFI 36-2640, *Executing Total Force Development*, 2.

<sup>24</sup> Col Mark Danigole (Air War College instructor and graduated Sq/CC and Wg/CV), interviewed by the author, January 10, 2014.

<sup>25</sup> Air Force Manual (AFMAN) 36-2643, *Air Force Mentoring Program*, 1 May 2013, 12-14.

<sup>26</sup> Air Force Guidance Memorandum (AFGM) to AFI 36-2406, *Officer and Enlisted Evaluation Systems*, 29 March 2013, Table 2.1.

<sup>27</sup> A review of AFMAN 36-2643, *Air Force Mentoring Program*, can greatly inform how a Sq/CC approaches developing officers on a variety of topics in all five OPD categories.

<sup>28</sup> Brig Gen Thomas Deale, Commandant, Air Command and Staff College, "Mentorship 201" (lecture, Air War College, Maxwell AFB, AL, 21 August 2013).

<sup>29</sup> Lt Col AJ Werner (Air War College student and graduated Sq/CC), interviewed by the author, September 15, 2013.

<sup>30</sup> 9 of 13 (69%) graduated Sq/CCs interviewed for this paper reported a reason they did not conduct as much deliberate leadership development was a lack of available time due to mission requirements or other higher priority tasks.

<sup>31</sup> The broad range of leadership topics discussed in 13 interviews with graduated Sq/CCs shows no coherent understanding or broad agreement as to exactly which leadership topics a Sq/CC should focus on with their assigned officers.

<sup>32</sup> AFDD 1-1, *Leadership and Force Development*, 27-36.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 27, 53.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 53-60.

<sup>35</sup> See AFMAN 36-2643, *Air Force Mentoring Program*, pages 16-19 for a list of resources to get started.

<sup>36</sup> 12 of 13 (92%) of interviewed graduated Sq/CCs were highly motivated to professionally develop their officers. One responded he was mildly motivated to do so, however he did perform OPD because he felt it was his duty.





## Bibliography

- Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 1-1. Leadership and Force Development, 10 November 2011.
- Air Force Instruction (AFI) 36-2110. *Assignments*, 22 September 2009, incorporating through change 2, 8 June 2012.
- AFI 36-2201. *Air Force Training Program*, 15 September 2010, incorporating through change 3, 7 August 2013.
- AFI 36-2301. *Developmental Education*, 16 July 2010, incorporating through change 2, 9 July 2013.
- AFI 36-2302. *Professional Development (Advanced Academic Degrees and Professional Continuing Education)*, 11 July 2001.
- AFI 36-2406. *Officer and Enlisted Evaluation Systems*, 2 January 2013, corrective actions applied on 5 April 2013.
- AFI 36-2501. *Officer Promotions*, 16 July, 2004, incorporating through change 3, 17 August 2009.
- AFI 36-2611. *Officer Professional Development*, 1 April 1996.
- AFI 36-2640. *Executing Total Force Development*, 16 December 2008.
- Air Force Manual (AFMAN) 36-2643. *Air Force Mentoring Program*, 1 May 2013
- Air Force Pamphlet (AFPAM) 36-2241. *Professional Development Guide*, 1 October 2011
- Air Force Personnel Center. "Static Reports – Historical Line Master."  
[http://access.afpc.af.mil/vbinDMZ/broker.exe?\\_program=DEMOGPUB.static\\_reports.sas&\\_service=pZ1pub1&\\_debug=0](http://access.afpc.af.mil/vbinDMZ/broker.exe?_program=DEMOGPUB.static_reports.sas&_service=pZ1pub1&_debug=0) (accessed 27 January 2014).
- Air Force Policy Directive (AFPD) 36-25. *Military Promotions and Demotions*, 21 June 1993
- AFPD 36-26. *Total Force Development*, 27 September 2011
- Air Force Portal. "2013 Chief of Staff Reading List." <http://static.dma.mil/usaf/csafreadinglist/> (accessed 1 October 1, 2013).
- Air Force Portal. "ADP." <https://www.my.af.mil/afpc2vpssc/vpsc/portalLogon.jsf> (accessed 1 October 2013).

Air Force Research Institute, Air University. Air Force Leadership Study: The Need for Deliberate Development. Research Paper, February 2012

Bernd Horn and Robert W. Walker, eds. *The Military Leadership Handbook*, Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2008.

Carter, John, Director, Academic Operations, Spaatz Center for Officer Education. "Professional Military Education Transformation." Lecture. Air War College, Maxwell AFB, AL, 14 November 2013.

Deale, Brig Gen Thomas, Commandant, Air Command and Staff College. "Mentorship 201." Lecture. Air War College, Maxwell AFB, AL, 21 August 2013.

Dempsey, Gen Martin. *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations 2020*. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 10 September 2012.

Johnson, Brad and Andersen, Gene. "Formal mentoring in the U.S. military: research evidence, lingering questions, and recommendations." *Naval War College Review*, 63, no. 2 (Spring 2010): [113-126]

Lackey, James and Kamena, Gene. "Mentoring: finding our way to the future." *Fires Magazine*, 1 May – June 2010, 22-25.

*Leader Development in Army Units - Views from the Field*. RAND Corporation. Santa Monica, CA: 2008.

Swain, Dr. Richard. "Reflection on an Ethic of Officership." *Parameters* 37, no. 1 (Spring 2007): [4-22].

United States Army. *Commanders Handbook for Unit Leader Development*. Fort Leavenworth, KS: Center for Army Leadership:  
<http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/CAL/repository/CommandersHandbook%5B1%5D.pdf>

Zachary, Lois J and Fischler, Lory A. "Those Who Lead, Mentor." *T+D* 64, no.3 (March 2010): [53-57].